

The following claims are presented for examination:

- 1.** (previously presented) A method comprising:

 - receiving a first plurality of protocol data units at a first input, wherein all of said first plurality of protocol data units are en route to a first congestible node;
 - maintaining at a protocol-data-unit excisor a first queue for said first plurality of protocol data units;
 - receiving at said protocol-data-unit excisor a flow control signal that indicates whether said first congestible node is ready to receive one or more of said protocol data units from said first queue; and
 - selectively dropping, at said protocol-data-unit excisor, one or more of said protocol data units based on a first metric of said first queue.
 - 2.** (previously presented) The method of claim 1 wherein said protocol-data-unit excisor decides whether to drop a protocol data unit based on Random Early Detection.
 - 3.** (previously presented) The method of claim 1 wherein said indication is conveyed using back-pressure flow control.
 - 4.** (previously presented) The method of claim 1 wherein said indication is conveyed using the Pause frame procedure of IEEE 802.3.
 - 5.** (previously presented) The method of claim 1 further comprising:

 - receiving a second plurality of protocol data units at a second input, wherein all of said second plurality of protocol data units are en route to a second congestible node;
 - maintaining at said protocol-data-unit excisor a second queue for said for said second plurality of protocol data units;
 - receiving at said protocol-data-unit excisor a flow control signal that indicates whether said second congestible node is ready to receive one or more of said protocol data units from said second queue; and
 - selectively dropping, at said protocol-data-unit excisor, one or more of said protocol data units based on a second metric of said second queue.
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- 6.** (previously presented) A protocol-data-unit excisor comprising:
- a first input for receiving a first plurality of protocol data units, wherein all of said first plurality of protocol data units are *en route* to a first congestible node;
 - a first queue for storing said first plurality of protocol data units;
 - a first receiver for receiving a flow control signal that indicates whether said first congestible node is ready to receive one or more of said protocol data units from said first queue; and
 - a processor for selectively dropping one or more of said protocol data units based on a metric of said first queue.
- 7.** (previously presented) The protocol-data-unit excisor of claim 6 wherein said indication is conveyed using back-pressure flow control.
- 8.** (previously presented) The protocol-data-unit excisor of claim 6 wherein said indication is conveyed using the Pause frame procedure of IEEE 802.3.
- 9.** (previously presented) The protocol-data-unit excisor of claim 6 wherein said protocol-data-unit excisor decides whether to drop a protocol data unit based on Random Early Detection.
- 10.** (previously presented) The protocol-data-unit excisor of claim 6 further comprising:
- a second input for receiving a second plurality of protocol data units, wherein all of said second plurality of protocol data units are en route to a second congestible node;
 - a second queue for storing said second plurality of protocol data units; and
 - a second receiver for receiving a flow control signal that indicates whether said second congestible node is ready to receive one or more of said protocol data units from said second queue;
- wherein said processor is also for selectively dropping one or more of said protocol data units based on a metric of said second queue.